

My name is Tonya,

I am 43 years old and the mother of a bright and beautiful 13 year old daughter. I get up every day, get my child to school and am lucky enough to have a job to go to. I am also on the Sexual Offenders Registry.

From 1994 until 2003, I worked for the Department of Corrections as a Correction Officer. In 2003, a 32 year old man in the prison where I worked was released on parole. After his release, we had a brief adult consensual relationship. Over a year after this occurred I was sought out and prosecuted for criminal sexual conduct. This person told the police he would have never seen me if he knew the trouble that could occur, and the contact was entirely of his own free will. This was not the best decision I had ever made but I was not aware of the consequences, as this was a brand new law in effect April 2003.

I went to court, and at the advice of my lawyer pled guilty to a reduced charge.(Mcl 750.520g2) The original charge (Mcl750.520c(1)(I) had a possible penalty of 15 years in prison, which paralyzed me with fear. Fear that I could not take care of my daughter. The judge decided to assess the minimum sentence of a \$1100 fine and 18 months probation, and a required 25 years on the registry. His comment was that there was no victim in this crime and the relationship was most certainly consensual. HB 4315 clearly addresses the law under which I was charged. It specifies coercion, which was not a factor in my case.

The registry law states; "The legislature has determined that a person who has been convicted of committing an offense covered by this act poses a potential serious menace to the health, safety, morals, and welfare of the people and particularly the children, of this state". I am on this list with people who are convicted pedophiles and rapists, who have been proven to be a menace to society.

My crime has cost a lot. It cost me my higher paying job, though many on the list cannot find work. I work 50 plus hours a week to try to make a home for me, and my child. The Registry also took away my peace of mind. Will someone recognize me? Will they say something to my daughter? How do I protect her from this situation? I am just a regular person and have harmed no one. It took away my freedom to live where I would like, such as closer than 1000 feet to a school. Also, under what circumstances am I allowed to be at the school? It is not very clear! I would like to go on a field trip to Chicago with my daughter but do not believe that I can, so my mother or sister will go.

I wake up every day and struggle with the reality of being on the Sexual Offender Registry. After being on this list for about 5 years, I am still anxious the four times a year when I have to check in to the State Police, with 20 years more to go! I believe that the Registry has a purpose for offenders who are a threat. I am a threat to no one! Will I be able to attend school events for my daughter in the future? Who knows what the future brings? I have found some comfort in being able to speak out about what happened to me. It was and is a horrible experience that has caused me to develop more strength and character, because of it. It was a poor choice I made, but is it a C.S.C. case deserving of 25 years on the Registry? You must decide that question. I find myself now, an advocate of reform in the S.O.R. to make sure only the true offenders are listed.

Thank you all for your time,  
Tonya Johnson